

# DCFS Weekly Update From the State Office

Friday, February 2, 2001

## Last Seen Headed over the Bermuda Triangle...

*By Richard Anderson*

The following article may apply to only a very few in our division. To all of you I send my appreciation for your hard work and dedication to improving and clarifying practice expectations in our daily work with children and families. I hope you will agree that, with the experience I will relate below, this message needed to be sent out to our entire staff.

I was talking yesterday with one of our qualitative reviewers who said they had spoken with an employee who had been with DCFS for five months and that this person had said they did not know anything about the practice model. "How can this be?" I wondered. This person must not be getting Weekly Update articles or hasn't been encouraged to read them. And how did they get left out of the training on at least the teaming module that has been delivered over the past few months? Do we have supervisors that really don't understand the learning expectation for each new employee regarding agency practice? Is there some misunderstanding that we can solve? What can we do to better reach all of our people?

Even though all of our new employee training practice model modules are not yet complete, we must try to get each new employee into the current practice model training as soon as it is offered. We would hope that our supervisors would give an overview of the model and what has been taught to date to provide a context for the training to the new employee. New employees need to begin receiving information on the model as soon as they start with the division. Please, don't hesitate in bringing our new staff up to date on the model. Talk about it in staff meetings--process what is changing in practice and how we can align our work with the model. Do we have people that don't understand yet that we need to do this? Meeting the agency standards means practicing in line with the model. We have been implementing the model by first training each of us in the concepts and skills, and then allowing time for each of us to understand the information and begin practicing it. We feel this is more fair than the approach of making policy and requiring a certain practice before people are trained and have acquired the skill to meet the expectation. We are currently preparing a proposal to be made to the administrative team for creating more coaching and feedback in practice skills in real practice situations for those who need or want this additional help.

I hope that what was discovered with this fairly new staff member is an isolated situation or, even better, a misunderstanding. If not, we need to know what isn't working.

Here is my research project proposal! I will buy lunch for the first ten people who contact me and let me know that they have not heard about the practice model and can somehow verify that this is true! I should have at least one response if the one employee I heard about reads this Weekly Update (if I haven't scared him/her away!). We will spend our time over lunch reviewing the practice model so you can be sure you aren't left out. I'd really like to reach those who are in this situation, so that they can get the help they need. For those who don't know me well, I promise there would

only be positive consequences by way of problem solving for those who might respond, and improvement in what we are doing to help all of you learn the model. I may want to look into training in your area, and may also offer help to your supervisor, if they are not getting what they need to help you. Oh, most importantly, the lunch needs to be at a place of average expense. Just wait, I know that some of my long time associates in the division will try to get a free lunch! For those of you who are contemplating this, I am leasing a lie detector! In all sincerity, please let me know if you are being left out of the loop on the practice model. I would like to discuss it with you over lunch or almost any other time. Please feel free to e-mail me directly with your response.

## Changes to Foster Family Training Requirements for DCFS

*By Kelly Peterson, Director of Education, Utah Foster Care Foundation*

Please be aware that as of January 1, 2001 there are new requirements for CPR/First Aid. The Utah Foster Care Foundation Trainers will no longer be doing the two-hour CPR/First Aid training each month.

For the protection of children in custody and Resource Families and for best practice, it has been determined that all Resource Families will be required to maintain CPR/First Aid certification. Each family attending training from the Utah Foster Care Foundation will need to become certified in CPR/First Aid before they can graduate from the Preservice training. They will need to show their certificate and a receipt for payment to the trainer. The trainer will note this on the roll and then AFTER the family becomes licensed, the Foundation will reimburse each FAMILY up to \$20.00. (The procedure for this payment will be coordinated with the Education Department and Nancy Mackey.)

For currently licensed families who will be renewing their licenses in 2001, they will be given a "grace period" through March to begin the procedure of becoming CPR/First Aid certified. These families will be notified that this is a new requirement. They will also be told that the Utah Foster Care Foundation will reimburse them for the FIRST YEAR ONLY for the payment of their certification UP TO \$20.00 per family.

## Legislative Update

*By Linda Wininger*

I haven't had a whole lot of feedback on the article I wrote last week so I'm guessing that either it was just what you wanted or it was so boring you skipped it altogether. So having nothing to go on to make changes I'll press on with the Senate bills. Just a little background: a bill is sponsored by a legislator. That person is either a Representative of the House or a Senator in the Senate. If the sponsor is a Representative the bill starts the process in the House and then moves to the Senate. If the legislator is a Senator it starts in the Senate and then goes to the House. It can be changed along the way but if a bill starts in the House and is changed by the Senate it must go back to the House for "Concurrence." That simply means that the

originating body must approve the changes by the other body. It works both ways—Senate to House or House to Senate.

So here are the Senate bills:

**SB 33, Mental Health Services for Foster and Adopted Children Task Force**—Senator Gene Davis. This bill creates a task force of eight legislators to study the system for delivering mental health services to foster and adopted children. It specifically looks at the Medicaid system and whether or not to “carve in” or “carve out” these children from the capitated system of providers. This bill came out of the Child Welfare Legislative Oversight Panel last year and is patterned after an idea that Robin Arnold-Williams presented to the panel.

This bill is currently in the House. It received a favorable recommendation from the House Health and Human Services Committee and has been returned to the Rules Committee because it has a fiscal impact.

**SB 64, Adoption Law Amendments**—Senator Terry Spencer. This bill expands those who are authorized to take parental rights relinquishments to anyone who is authorized to take relinquishments under the Adoptions Act. It makes several other technical changes.

This bill has been deleted title and body and a first substitute bill has been entered instead. This occurred in the Senate Human Services Committee. The substitute bill was passed out of that committee with a favorable recommendation and is now on the Senate second reading calendar.

**SB 71, Tax Credits for Special Needs Adoptions**—Senator Carlene Walker. This bill allows for a tax credit for tax year 2001 and for each of the next three years, of \$3,000 for families who adopt a special needs child after January 1, 2001.

This bill is currently in the Senate Rules Committee. It is on the agenda for the Senate Revenue and Taxation Committee meeting for February 6, 2001.

**SB 91, Child Firearm Access Prevention**—Senator Paula Julander. This bill creates a crime for negligent storage of a firearm with some exceptions. It specifically pertains to keeping a loaded firearm where a minor can gain access to it and causes death or bodily injury to himself or another person.

The bill is currently in the Senate Rules Committee and has not yet been assigned to a standing committee.

**1SSB 97, Special Needs Adoption**—Senator Lyle Hillyard. This bill is also a first substitute for the original bill. The bill amends the duties of DCFS regarding financial support of adoptions. It defines several terms including special needs, adoption assistance, monthly subsidy, and state medical assistance. It also includes a reference to federal requirements governing adoption subsidies. This bill was drafted with much input from Robin Arnold-Williams. It has also had substantial input from groups such as SAFE CARE and adoptive parents. I have heard that there may be some additional amendments on the Senate floor but don't have specifics yet.

This bill is currently on the Senate third reading calendar.

**SB 111, Conflict of Interest Investigations into Allegation of Child Abuse and Neglect**–Senator D. Chris Buttars. This bill is identical to HB 225 by Matt Throckmorton. It allows for the Division to contract with independent child protection investigators to conduct conflict of interest investigations of foster parents and employees of the division. It is our bill and is expected to pass. The bill will not change practice as the Division has already contracted with Sipapu to conduct these investigations, and as of January 1, 2001 they have begun to do those investigations.

This bill is currently on the agenda for the House Health and Human Services Committee for February 5, 2001.

**SB 117, Guardian ad Litem Amendments**–Senator Lyle Hillyard. This bill expands the duties of the Director of the Guardian ad Litem to include hiring, training, supervising, and administering both investigators and private attorneys who may be court appointed as Guardian ad Litem in child custody and visitation disputes. It will not affect our practice.

This bill is currently in the Senate Rules Committee awaiting assignment to a standing committee.

**SB 119, Child Welfare Amendments**–Senator Lyle Hillyard. This is one of our bills. It does three things. First, it provides for the appeals from an Administrative Hearing to be heard in Juvenile Court rather than in Juvenile Court for substantiations that would be on the licensing database (A letters) and District Court for those that do not affect the individuals ability to be licensed (B letters). Currently, a person could possibly have to go before two separate courts if they are substantiated for both types of abuse or neglect, for example, both physical and emotional abuse. Second, the bill provides DCFS access to Juvenile Court records when we are not a party to the action. This will specifically help us in determining whether or not an individual is entitled to an Administrative Hearing. Third, the bill changes a section of the code that allows a party in a suit to access all of the records the division has that pertain to the suit. This actually includes information that is protected by GRAMA such as referent names, safety plans in Domestic Violence cases, etc. The section would then read that the party can have records as explained in GRAMA. This bill affects only those individual jobs that work specifically in the areas pertaining to hearings and DCFS records.

This bill is currently on the agenda for the Senate Human Services Committee for February 6, 2001.

**SB 136, Parenting Plan for Divorcing Parents**–Senator Lyle Hillyard. This bill really does not have much of anything pertaining to our business but it is interesting so I thought I would include it. It requires a divorcing couple, who is asking for joint visitation, to provide a parenting plan. It does not affect our practice.

This bill is currently on the agenda for the Senate Human Services Committee for February 6, 2001.

**SB 153, Kinship Placement for Foster Children**–Senator Bill Wright. This is one of our bills. It allows for children to be placed with kin prior to a shelter hearing rather than going to shelter. It also requires a shelter hearing when children are placed with kin, taken to a Domestic Violence shelter by a non- offending parent, or when an abusing parent is required to leave the home. This bill will significantly affect our CPS practice making it possible to protect a child in ways other than removing the child from home and family.

This bill is currently in the Senate Rules Committee awaiting assignment to a Senate standing committee.

**SB 165, Non-custodial Visitation**–Senator Parley Hellewell. This bill does not affect our practice. It merely changes the term “visitation” to “parent-time” throughout the code.

This bill is currently on the Senate second reading calendar.

## Update on House Bills

**HB 31**–on the House Concurrence Calendar, which means there were small changes, made to the bill while in the Senate that the House must agree to. These amendments were proposed by Senator Wright and included in the purpose of the Child Welfare Legislative Oversight Panel to study actions that the state can take to preserve, unify, and strengthen the child’s family ties whenever possible and in the child’s best interest, including recognizing the constitutional rights of the parents whenever family ties are severed or infringed.

**HB 33**–This bill has been forwarded for enrolling. The governor will now have the option of signing the bill, vetoing the bill, or leaving it to become law without his signature.

**HB 64**–This bill received a favorable recommendation from the Senate Education committee. It will be on the Senate third reading calendar.

**HB 83**–This bill was just received by the Senate and is waiting for introduction to the Senate. It has had a number of amendments proposed and was successfully amended on the House floor yesterday. I will wait until it has passed the Senate floor and is in its final state before I update you. There are likely to be more changes in the works.

**HB 117**–This bill was passed out of the House Committee with a favorable recommendation. It has been considerably watered down but still requires a warrant to remove a child unless the child’s health or safety is endangered. It also prohibits the removal of a child for the sole purpose of collecting evidence. It is on the House second reading calendar. The floor debate on this one could be interesting.

**HB 188**–This bill had a favorable recommendation from the Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Committee and recommended that it be placed on the consent calendar. This allows for the bill to pass through the House without debate. It must

have committee support and sponsor endorsement to be placed on the consent calendar.

**HB 219**–This bill had a favorable recommendation from the House Judiciary Committee with some amendments. The amendments slightly changed the composition of the task force. It is now on the House third reading calendar.

**HB 224**–This bill is on the agenda for the Senate Human Services Committee for February 6, 2001.

**HB 225**–This bill is on the House third reading calendar.

**HB 232**–This bill is sailing through the Legislative process. It was passed out of the Senate Health and Environment Committee with a unanimous vote. It has been amended in the following way: The requirement for a degree in social work has been deleted and the phrase “minimum of a bachelor’s degree” has been substituted. The bill will now be placed on the Senate third reading calendar.

**HB 257**–Currently on the House third reading calendar.

### House Bills Newly Introduced this Week

**HB 12, Provision for the Legal Relinquishment of a Newborn**–Representative Patrice Arent.

**HB 147, Modification of Termination of Parental Rights**–Representative Mike Thompson. NO TEXT.

HB 148, Child Welfare Alternative Dispute Resolution–Representative A. Lamont Tyler. This bill allows the court to order a family unity conference under DCFS authority when it is requested by the parents or the parties to an abuse or neglect action. It also establishes the purpose of the family unity conference and describes circumstances in which the court may not order one. The Division supports this bill.

The bill is currently in the House Rules Committee waiting for standing committee assignment.

**HB 269, Amendments to Concurrent Jurisdiction in Adoption Cases**–Representative Matt Throckmorton. This bill modifies the Juvenile Courts Act to give the Juvenile Court exclusive original jurisdiction in adoption proceedings.

This bill has currently been read for the first time in the House and will now go to the rules committee for assignment to a standing committee.

**HB 285, Parental Rights in Juvenile Courts**–Representative Mike Thompson. NO TEXT.

**HB 309, Educational Neglect Amendments**–Representative Duane Bourdeaux. NO TEXT.

**HB 387, Narrowing Grounds for Removal of a Child from the Home**—Representative Matt Throckmorton. This bill amends the definition of abuse of a child to exclude reasonable discipline by a parent or guardian involving spanking or paddling if the discipline was not so excessive as to cause physical or mental harm to the child. The definition of both physical and mental harm is also included. It also requires the Division to classify referrals that fall into this category as “without merit” and to drop the investigation.

This bill is currently in the House Rules Committee waiting for assignment to a standing committee.

I think that’s all for now! I’ll be back for an update next week.

## Traveling No More...

*By Joelle Horel and Linda O’Brien*

Almost seven years ago, Placement Information Records (a.k.a. “purple binders” or “traveling records”) came into being. These packets of information were developed in response to foster parent requests to have consistent information shared when a child moved from one foster home to another. DCFS has revised the record on several occasions.

A recent request for another revision came from Region Directors, who correctly pointed out that, as a Division, we do not want to support children “traveling” through the foster care system! We are looking for consistent, stable placements. With this in mind, changes for the packet were suggested by the Out-of-Home Steering Committee and implemented by Linda O’Brien.

A new “trial” name has been placed on the binder’s inserts. The “Home-to-Home Packet” not only has a new name, but also a slightly different focus. In the past, the emphasis of this book was limited primarily to foster care forms. Now it is hoped that the use of the Home-to-Home Packet can expand to create an information bridge, not only the sharing of information between foster and adoptive families, but also ensuring that information and memories are not lost when a child returns home.

With the emphasis on providing a sense of self that connects children to their past, present, and future, please adjust your office procedures as follows:

- Continue to use the existing purple folders. (These cost over \$3.50 each to have reprinted.)
- Caseworkers, please ask to see a child’s Home-to-Home Packet at least quarterly. It helps to inform the foster parent ahead of time that this will be part of your upcoming visit. The purpose of review is not just for the sake of audit, but for ensuring that information about the child’s stay in care is available--and recorded.
- Forms for Home-to-Home Packets are available for printout from SAFE. (FYI--travelling packets were first put together by the DCFS training department. Thanks former TASK staff!)

- When a case is closed, please make sure that all of Section 7 is given to the parents. It is good practice to make copies of the children's pictures, etc. from that section to keep in our files (that way if the pictures are ever lost, we can offer replacements). The child's report cards, inventory list, and immunization card should be passed along at this time too, and parents should be given information about how to access third party information, such as medical reports, contained in the record.
- All other information is to be placed with the Family Case File when custody and guardianship transfers from the Division.
- New Home-to-Home Packets can be ordered through Forms Control and should be available within a week.

As we implement this newest version, please provide feedback to the Out-of-Home Steering Committee. Adults who spent time in foster care have made it clear that it's often the "little things" that made the most difference in helping them preserve their identity, history, and connections to important people in their lives. Please make sure that memories, mementos, pictures, and day-to-day information are not lost when a child leaves our care. Thanks!

## New Respite Codes

*By Linda O'Brien*

Because DCFS respite codes were tied in with codes used by the Division of Services to People with Disabilities (DSPD) (and DSPD rates were higher), we needed to develop our own codes to allow for correct foster respite rates to be paid when paying a respite provider. Effective Monday, February 5<sup>th</sup>, the new respite codes will be in place.

RE1 – Respite Care Basic Rate  
 RE2 – Respite Care Specialized Rate  
 RE3 – Respite Care Structured Rate

If you have a foster child who is at a basic rate, the respite provider will be paid a basic respite rate. If your child is at a specialized rate, the provider needs to be licensed for specialized and will be paid at the specialized respite rate. The same usually holds true for a structured foster child. The foster parent must be licensed as a structured provider to receive the structured rate. In some circumstances (when appropriate and with prior caseworker approval) a specialized foster parent may provide respite care for a child in a structured placement, but they will receive the specialized rate as they have not been trained to deliver the Behavior Replacement Program.

We are in the process of doing a mass change to provider screens. This change will replace all the RP1, RP2, and RP3 approvals for providers with RE1, RE2, and RE3. If you are having problems entering payments after this conversion takes place, please call your Family Resource Consultant Technician to see if the provider has been updated correctly.



# To Make Your Life Easier...Using SAFE Optimally

*By Robert Lewis*

## Avoiding Entry of "2000" When You Mean "2001"

Several users have told us that beginning this year they have had trouble with entering dates in SAFE. Starting in January 2001, they continue to make entries with "2000." The main cause of this problem seems to be that there is an edit mask for many of the date fields containing the characters "00.00." During 2000, if no entry was made in the place of the latter "00" SAFE would read this blank to mean 2000. During this past year, we got used to not making a year date entry. In 1999, we had to make a deliberate entry "99" in the year field. Now, in 2001, we have to go back to making a deliberate "01" entry to get the year right. Technical staff persons tell us that there is no practical way to put 2001 in the date edit mask. It would require new code in every date field in the system, and then need to be updated each year.

The two best solutions depend on you:

1. Get back in the habit of entering the last two digits of the year when keying a date into SAFE; or
2. Use CTRL-T more extensively. In case you haven't picked up on this, CTRL-T inserts today's date into the field that is highlighted or where the cursor rests. We are working to improve the standardization of date fields so that CTRL-T will work in every date field. You will see this in Release 2.300, which is due for implementation in early March.

## Practice Model Questions and Answers

*By Midge Delavan*

Please recall that in the Weekly Update of January 19, 2001, there were two questions posed for your consideration. The answers to those questions are listed below:

1. Question: Who selects the members for the family team? Answer: The caseworker assists the family in identifying team members.
2. Question: What is the best tool for finding extended family and community supports for a family? Answer: A genogram is helpful in identifying extended family members, and the support network map is helpful in identifying informal and community supports for a family.

Ready for another round of questions? Great! Here they are:

1. Which service or program areas within DCFS make use of practice model training support to build trusting relationships and teams with families?
  - a. CPS
  - b. In-Home/Family Preservation
  - c. Out-of-Home
  - d. Independent Living

- e. Domestic Violence
  - f. All of the above
2. What is the relationship of the Qualitative Case Review (QCR) to the practice model principles and skills?
- a. The QCR includes a review that looks for teams for families and children
  - b. Practice model skills are not included in the QCR
  - c. Documentation of information and decisions based on a thorough functional family assessment is an important part of QCR
  - d. Answers a and c
  - e. None of the above

## Media Training

*By Carol Miller*

Human Services Public Information Officer Carol Sisco talked about a basic media training session that she teaches called, "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About the Media but Were Afraid to Ask" during our Public Information Committee meeting last week. Sisco will teach the class in various regions across the state if enough people sign up for it. She also offers more in-depth classes that involve on-camera training.

If your area is interested, please contact Carol Sisco for additional information. Carol is on the state e-mail system, or her telephone number is (801) 538-3991.